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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the above-identified application

Listing of Claims:

1 (Currently Amended) A method of processing data in a stateful protocol processing system, said method comprising:

receiving a first message of a first flow comprised of a first plurality of messages;
deriving a first event from said first message, said first event containing flow information identifying said first flow;

extracting said flow information from said first event;

retrieving, from a common memory using said flow information, a first flow state characterizing said first flow, said first flow state including a first workspace portion and a second workspace portion;

storing said first workspace portion in a first local memory and said second workspace portion in a second local memory distinct from said first local memory;

assigning said first workspace portion to a first protocol processing core and said second workspace portion to a second protocol processing core; and

processing, consistent with a stateful protocol associated with said first flow, said first event using said first protocol processing core and said second protocol processing core thereby yielding a modified first workspace portion and a modified second workspace portion, respectively; and

writing said modified first workspace portion and said modified second workspace portion to said common memory.

2 (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein said first flow state is defined at least in part by a plurality of protocol layers, said first workspace portion and said second workspace portion corresponding to different ones of said plurality of protocol layers.

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3 (Canceled). The method of claim 1 wherein said processing includes modifying said first workspace portion in order to thereby yield a modified first workspace portion, and writing back said modified first workspace portion.

4 (Currently Amended). The method of claim ~~13~~ wherein said processing further includes communicating an inter core event from said first protocol processing core to said second protocol processing core.

5 (Canceled). The method of claim 4 wherein said second protocol processing core modifies said second workspace portion in order to create a modified second workspace portion and writes back said second modified workspace portion.

6 (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein said first protocol processing core issues a done signal upon completing processing of said first event, said done signal causing release of an event queue element associated with said first protocol processing core.

7 (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein said first flow state further includes a shared flow state provided to both said first protocol processing core and said second protocol processing core.

8 (Original). The method of claim 7 wherein said first protocol processing core generates a flow state write mask upon modifying selected areas of said shared flow state portion, said flow state write mask preventing said selected areas from being overwritten.

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9 (Currently Amended). A stateful protocol processing apparatus configured to process multiple flows of messages, said apparatus comprising:

a first protocol processing core including a first processor element;

a second protocol processing core including a second processor element;

an input module configured to receive a first message of a first flow comprised of a first plurality of messages, derive a first event from said first message, and extract flow information identifying said first flow from said first event;

a lookup controller operative to retrieve, from a common memory using said flow information, a first flow state characterizing said first flow, said first flow state including a first workspace portion assigned to said first protocol processing core and a second workspace portion assigned to said second protocol processing core;

a first local memory in which is stored said first workspace portion and a second local memory distinct from said first local memory in which is stored said second workspace portion;

wherein said first event is processed consistent with a stateful protocol associated with said first flow using said first protocol processing core and said second protocol processing core thereby yielding a modified first workspace portion and a modified second workspace portion, respectively; and

wherein said modified first workspace portion and said modified second workspace portion are written to said common memory.

10 (Original). The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said first flow state is defined at least in part by a plurality of protocol layers, said first workspace portion and said second workspace portion corresponding to different ones of said plurality of protocol layers.

11 (Canceled). The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said first protocol processing core modifies said first workspace portion and thereby creates a modified first workspace portion, said first protocol processing core further writing back said modified first workspace portion to said lookup controller.

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12 (Currently Amended). The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said first protocol processing core transmits an inter core event to said second protocol processing core.

13 (Canceled). The apparatus of claim 11 wherein said second protocol processing core modifies said second workspace portion in order to create a modified second workspace portion and writes back said second modified workspace portion to said lookup controller.

14 (Original). The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said first protocol processing core issues a done signal upon completing processing of said first event, said done signal causing release of an event queue element associated with said first protocol processing core.

15 (Original). The apparatus of claim 9 wherein said first flow state further includes a shared flow state provided to both said first protocol processing core and said second protocol processing core.

16 (Original). The apparatus of claim 15 wherein said first protocol processing core generates a flow state write mask upon modifying selected areas of said shared flow state portion, said flow state write mask preventing said selected areas from being overwritten.

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17 (Previously Presented). A method of processing data in a stateful protocol processing system, said method comprising:

receiving a first message of a first flow comprised of a first plurality of messages;

deriving a first event from said first message, said first event containing flow information identifying said first flow;

extracting said flow information from said first event;

retrieving, from a common memory using said flow information, a first flow state characterizing said first flow, said first flow state including a first workspace portion and a second workspace portion;

storing said first workspace portion in a first local memory and said second workspace portion in a second local memory distinct from said first local memory;

processing said first event consistent with a stateful protocol associated with said first flow and making corresponding modifications within said first workspace portion and said second workspace portion, thereby yielding a modified first workspace portion and a modified second workspace portion, respectively; and

writing said modified first workspace portion and said modified second workspace portion to said common memory.

18 (Original). The method of claim 17 wherein said first local memory is associated with a first protocol processing core and said second local memory is associated with a second protocol processing core.

19 (Original). The method of claim 18 wherein said first protocol processing core performs an initial portion of said processing of said first event and then hands off said first event to said second protocol processing core for performance of a subsequent portion of said processing of said first event.

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20 (Original). The method of claim 19 wherein said first protocol processing core modifies said first workspace portion in connection with said initial portion of said processing and said second protocol processing core modifies said second workspace portion in connection with said subsequent portion of said processing.

21 (Original). The method of claim 18 wherein said first protocol processing core performs an initial portion of said processing of said first event and said second protocol processing core subsequently performs a final portion of said processing of said first event.

22 (Original). The method of claim 21 wherein said modified first workspace portion and said modified second workspace portion are written back to said common memory substantially contemporaneously subsequent to completion of said final portion of said processing of said first event.

23 (Original). The method of claim 17 wherein said modified first workspace portion and said modified second workspace portion are written to said common memory as a contiguous block.

24 (Original). The method of claim 17 wherein said first workspace portion and said second workspace portion are stored within a contiguous block within said common memory.

25 (Original). The method of claim 17 wherein said first flow state is defined at least in part by a plurality of protocol layers, said first workspace portion and said second workspace portion corresponding to different ones of said plurality of protocol layers.

26 (Canceled). The method of claim 17 wherein said first flow state is defined at least in part by a plurality of protocol layers, said first workspace portion and said second workspace portion corresponding to different ones of said plurality of protocol layers.

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27 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 1 wherein said first event includes state information relevant to said stateful protocol.

28. (Currently Amended) A method of processing data in a stateful protocol processing system, said method comprising:

receiving a first message of a first flow comprised of a first plurality of messages, said first flow being characterized by a first flow state;

deriving a first event from said first message, said deriving including separating state information relevant to said first flow state from other information in said first message;

extracting at least a portion of said state information from said first event;

retrieving, from a common memory, said first flow state using said at least a portion of said state information, said first flow state including a first workspace portion and a second workspace portion;

storing said first workspace portion in a first local memory and said second workspace portion in a second local memory distinct from said first local memory;

assigning said first workspace portion to a first protocol processing core and said second workspace portion to a second protocol processing core; and

processing said first event using said first protocol processing core and said second protocol processing core thereby yielding a modified first workspace portion and a modified second workspace portion, respectively; and

writing said modified first workspace portion and said modified second workspace portion to said common memory.

29 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 28 wherein the deriving includes determining the first event to be of a first type and including an indication of said first type in a representation of the first event.

30 (Previously Presented). The method of claim 29 wherein said processing of said first event is performed in accordance with said first type.